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The practicum is designed to provide supervised experience in the development of well trained counselors. A study at the University of Illinois using 10 post-master's degree students enrolled in a one semester supervised practicum investigated the relationship between the practicum and: (1) the development of counselor skills of empathy, warmth and genuineness and: (2) change in the counselor candidates' perception of affective word meanings on a semantic differential. Data were provided by tape-recorded counseling sessions. Results indicated: (1) that the sixteen week training period led to successive increases in the counselor skills of empathy, warmth and skill, resulting in improved counselor-client relations, and (2) that the sixteen week course did not lead to any significant changes in counselors' perceptions of word meanings, except as they viewed the word "Professional." (LS)

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SKILL ACQUISITION AND PERCEPTION CHANGE OF COUNSELOR CANDIDATES DURING PRACTICUM

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Counselor educators are continually analyzing, probing, studying, and questioning the impact of practicum in counseling on counselor candidates. Basically, the purpose of the practicum is to provide supervised experience in the development of well-trained effective counselors. The two main approaches to this task seem to be: that practicum is, in fact, a training experience focusing on the development of skills (Arbuckle, 1965; Walz & Roeber, 1962; Truax & Carkhuff, 1967) and that practicum is an experience focusing on the counselor development of attitudes toward self, self-perceptions, and self-understanding (Johnston & Gysbers, 1966; Patterson, 1964).

The present study has been devoted to measuring the degree to which counselor candidates profited from a one-semester supervised practice in counseling. Two aspects of counselor candidate change and development were studied: (1) development of skills and (2) perceptual change. The first of the propositions tested was that students participating in the practicum would exhibit a measurable increase in empathy, warmth, and genuineness as a result of the practicum experience. These behaviors of empathy, warmth, and genuineness are those described by Truax and Carkhuff (1967) as necessary conditions for effective counseling. The second proposition tested was that the counselor candidates would change in their perceptions of affective word meanings on a semantic differential as a result of the practicum experience.

SUBJECTS

The subjects used in this study were ten post-master's degree students[1/] enrolled in a practicum in counseling in the Division of Counselor Education at

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the University of Illinois during the fall semester, 1966-67. There were five males and five females. The subjects were uninformed with respect to the experimental propositions and unaware that their behavior in the theraphy sessions was to be analyzed for the present study.

INSTRUMENTS

This study made use of three scales designed by Truax and his associates (cf. Truax & Carkhuff, 1967) to measure "accurate empathy," "nonpossessive warmth" and "therapist's genuineness" for research purposes.

The scales were constructed to be used in live or taped sessions of psychotherapy and counseling mainly for individual type of therapy. High scores on the scales indicate the presence of appropriate responses given by the therapist, while low scores indicate the absence of the respective attitude on the part of the therapist.

A detailed description of the scales may be found in Truax and Carkhuff (1967). Some of the main characteristics of each scale are as follows:

a. Accurate Empathy Scale. At a high level of accurate empathy the therapist's responses indicate his sensitive understanding of the obvious feelings and also serve to clarify and expand the client's awareness of his own feelings and experiences. At low level of accurate empathy, the therapist tends to misinterpret what the patient is feeling; he is preoccupied with and interested in his own intellectual interpretations rather than in the client.

b. Nonpossessive Warmth Scale. "The dimension of nonpossessive warmth or unconditional positive regard, ranges from a high level where the therapist warmly accepts the patient's experience as part of that person, without imposing conditions; to a low level where the therapist evaluates the patient or his feelings, expresses dislike or disapproval, or expresses warmth in a selective and evaluating way" (p. 58).

c. Therapist Genuineness Scale. The high level of this scale is characterized by self-congruence, where the therapist is freely and deeply himself. At a very low level the therapist presents a facade or defends and denies his feelings.

The range of the scores varies for each of the three scales. Accurate empathy ranges from one to nine, nonpossessive warmth and therapist's genuineness from one to five.

The instrument used to measure change in perception was composed of ten stimulus words directly related to counseling and/or the assessment of counseling: sensitive, sincere, professional, permissive, affectionate, different, honest, interested, warm, and understanding. Nine sets of bipolar semantic differential scales, three to represent each of the three major dimensions (evaluation, potency, activity) found in factor analytic studies were used. The factors represented, and the values of the fact or loadings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 about here

PROCEDURE

The raw data for analyses were provided by tape-recorded counseling sessions. Three sessions were chosen for analysis: one session from the beginning of the training period, the second session from the eighth week of training, and a third session seven weeks later at the end of the training.

Each of the ten subjects was rated and given a score on empathy, warmth and genuineness by the experimenter. These ratings were based on three 3-minute samples taken at random from each session. The average of the scores over the three samples is the subject's score for the session. The only condition for selection of these samples was that they include instances of conversation from both the counselor and the client. In order for the samples to be representative of the complete counseling session, the three samples were taken from the

beginning, middle and end of each session, respectively. Thus, for each subject a nine-minute sample representative of the whole session was obtained at three stages of the supervised practice. For each stage the subjects were given a score on each of the three scales described above. It was then possible to compare the scores of the first, second, and last stage with respect to empathy, warmth, and genuineness.

The semantic differential was administered at times corresponding with the three sessions chosen for tape analysis: beginning of training, middle of training period, and end of training period. The subjects were directed to make judgments on the semantic differential scale on the basis of what the stimulus words meant to them.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Relation between Training and Therapist-Offered Conditions

The empathy scores, warmth scores, and genuineness scores based on the nine-minute samples from each session were summed over the nine subjects and divided by nine to yield the average score of the three scales, respectively. This procedure was repeated for the three stages of the training at which measurements were taken. Thus a mean empathy score was obtained for each of the three stages--beginning, middle, and end of the practicum. Similarly, three mean warmth scores and three mean genuineness scores were computed. These mean scores were divided by the respective ranges of the scales, thus yielding a relative index with a maximum score of one and a minimum of zero. The relative scores are presented in the columns to the right of the means in Table 2.

Table 2 about here

Here it can be seen that consistent with the hypothesis the mean scores of therapist-offered conditions increase with the progressive stages of training. That is, as the trainees gain experience with practice they exhibit increasing amounts of accurate empathy, nonpossessive warmth, and the therapist's genuineness. This trend can be seen more clearly in the graphic representation of Figure 1.

Figure 1 about here

Table 3 represents the tests of significance for these increases in mean scores. One-tailed t-tests for the significance of difference between correlated means were used to test the experimental propositions of increasing therapist-offered conditions with practice. The last column in Table 3 presents the amount of variance accounted for by the independent variable, the practicum.

Table 3 about here

In Table 3 it can be seen that most of the differences between the three stages of training are statistically significant beyond the .05 level. This finding provides strong support for the proposition that supervised practice leads to increases in the therapist-offered conditions, i.e., empathy, warmth, and genuineness.

However, the rate of increase in therapist-offered conditions varies for the different stages of the training and for the particular scale under consideration. Thus, the increase in empathy and warmth is greater at the beginning of the training period than towards its end. Genuineness, on the other hand, shows a small increase in the first half and a larger gain in the second half of the period. Standard statistical tests to assess the significance of the strength could not be applied here because the data did not meet the requirement of statistical independence of cases. The only conclusion that can be drawn at this point

with reasonable confidence is that therapist-offered conditions are a monotonically increasing function of the supervised practicum. Further research is needed to establish the exact functional relation between the two variables.

The last column in Table 3 indicates the percentage of variance accounted for by the different stages of the training period. The percent of variance explained by the total period (beginning to end) is, of course, redundant with the percentages for the first half (beginning to middle) and for the second half (middle to end) of the training period.

In general, it can be seen that a sizable amount of the total variance was accounted for by the independent variable. Furthermore, it is obvious that the empathy scale is the more efficient of the three instruments in the sense that its variance could be explained best by the supervised practice. It is the impression of the present investigators that this effect is at least in part due to the greater tangibility of the empathy variable. Empathy seems to be learned more easily by the counselor candidates and is more reliably rated on the nine-point scale than the other two variables. Hence, less variable error is introduced into the empathy scores and a greater portion of the total variance can be accounted for.

2. Correlations between Empathy, Warmth, and Genuineness

All three of the therapist-offered conditions, empathy, warmth, and genuineness, are a positive function of appropriate training. The degree to which the three therapist-offered conditions reveal the same or different information is the question of statistical association between the three variables. Product-moment correlation coefficients were computed between empathy-warmth, empathy-genuineness, warmth-genuineness for each of the three stages of the training. These correlations are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 about here

It appears that much of the variance is shared by the three scales. The correlation coefficients between the paired scales are high except for empathy-genuineness correlation at the second stage.

These results suggest that the three scales measure to a certain extent the same underlying dimension. It seems then that the trainees acquire a rather general attitude toward their client which is reflected in all three of the therapist-offered conditions.

As indicated previously, empathy is the most concrete of the three experimental variables; it provides the most accurate measurements and is learned readily by the trainees. It would appear therefore that display of accurate empathy should be emphasized more strongly in supervised practice for counselors. Although warmth and genuineness may be variables conceptually independent of empathy they will tend to covary with the latter. Improvements in accurate empathy are therefore likely to be reflected in corresponding changes of warmth and genuineness. Methodologically, this simplifies both (1) the actual training of prospective counselors and (2) research within this area. This study indicates that supervisors and trainees can concentrate on the acquisition of empathy. It seems sufficient to measure only this variable in research studies on effectiveness of counseling.

3. A Check on the Reliability of the Scales

The scope of the present study did not allow for an extensive investigation of the interrater reliability of the measuring instruments. To get a rough estimate of the stability of the measurement, a second rater was instructed to assign scores to three trainees' samples to random. Three 3-minute samples were used for each trainee and were scored on empathy, warmth, and genuineness. Correlations were computed between these scores and those assigned by the experimenters for each of the three scales. The reliability coefficients were

.996, .982, and .982 for empathy, warmth, and genuineness, respectively. These correlations demonstrate high interrater reliability although the small number of cases demands certain reservation in interpreting the results.

4. The Semantic Differential

The responses on the semantic differential scale were added to the factors represented for each of the stimulus concepts following the procedure as developed by Jenkins (1958). One-tailed t-tests for the significance of difference between correlated means were used to test the experimental hypotheses. In Tables 5, 6, and 7 are presented the results of these analyses for the beginning to middle, middle to end, and beginning to end, respectively. The means, paired-standard error and t-values for all ten stimulus words and three factors used, are presented.

It can be seen in Table 5 that there was significant difference on eight of the 30 variables. More importantly, there was mean increase from beginning to middle on four variables, and mean decreases on seven variables that demonstrated some significance. In a comparison of Table 5 with Table 6, it can be seen that three of the four variables demonstrating mean increase change from beginning to middle, show mean decrease change from middle to end, and six of the variables showing some significant mean decrease from beginning to middle, demonstrate the

Tables 5 and 6 about here

reverse, that is some significant mean increase from middle to end. The overall change from beginning to end, as demonstrated in Table 7, is very limited, with only five variables demonstrating significant change, with concept "Professional" accounting for three-fifths of all significance.

A thorough comparison of the results appears to fail to reject the hypothesis that practicum in counseling does not change the perceptions of the counselor candidates, at least insofar as this instrument would indicate. More importantly,

such a close examination of these results would demonstrate that a great deal of change does take place during the first half of the experience, but that this change is temporary in nature and is "undone" in the last half of the total experience.

CONCLUSIONS

This was an empirical investigation of the relationship between supervised practice in counseling and (1) the development of the counselor skills of empathy, warmth, and genuineness and (2) change in counselor perceptions of word-concepts deemed to be important for the counselor effect.

In support of the first experimental proposition it was found that a 16-week training period led to successive increases in the therapist-offered conditions, as measured on scales developed by Truax and Carkhuff (1967). These authors had also shown that higher levels of the therapist-offered conditions were related to increases in self-exploration by the client. It was therefore assumed that the supervised practice under investigation had a beneficial effect on the trainees' relations to their clients.

Since it was found that empathy, warmth, and genuineness correlated highly with each other, it was, therefore, suggested that sufficient information could be gained by considering only one of the three scales. There was some indication that empathy was most adequate for this purpose because of its relative completeness.

Table 7 about here

In contradiction to the second experimental proposition it was found that a 16-week training period did not lead to any significant change in the perceptions of the counselor candidates, except as they view the word-concept "Professional." It appears that there is some significant change during the first half of the

total experience while the behaviors of demonstrating the therapist-offered conditions are being developed. Once these therapist-offered conditions are developed about the middle of the practicum, it appears that any perceptual change that did take place from the beginning to the middle, is reversed from the middle to the end of practicum leaving the counselor candidate more skillful, but with the perceptions of significant concepts relatively similar to those he had at the time of his entry into practicum.

Footnotes

1/The tape analysis of one physically handicapped student proved impossible resulting in a usable S of 9 for the tape analysis and an S of 10 for the semantic differential.

2/Complete data may be obtained on request from Daniel J. Delaney, College of Education, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois 61801.

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Figure 1.--Increasing Therapist Offered Conditions with Training (N = 9)

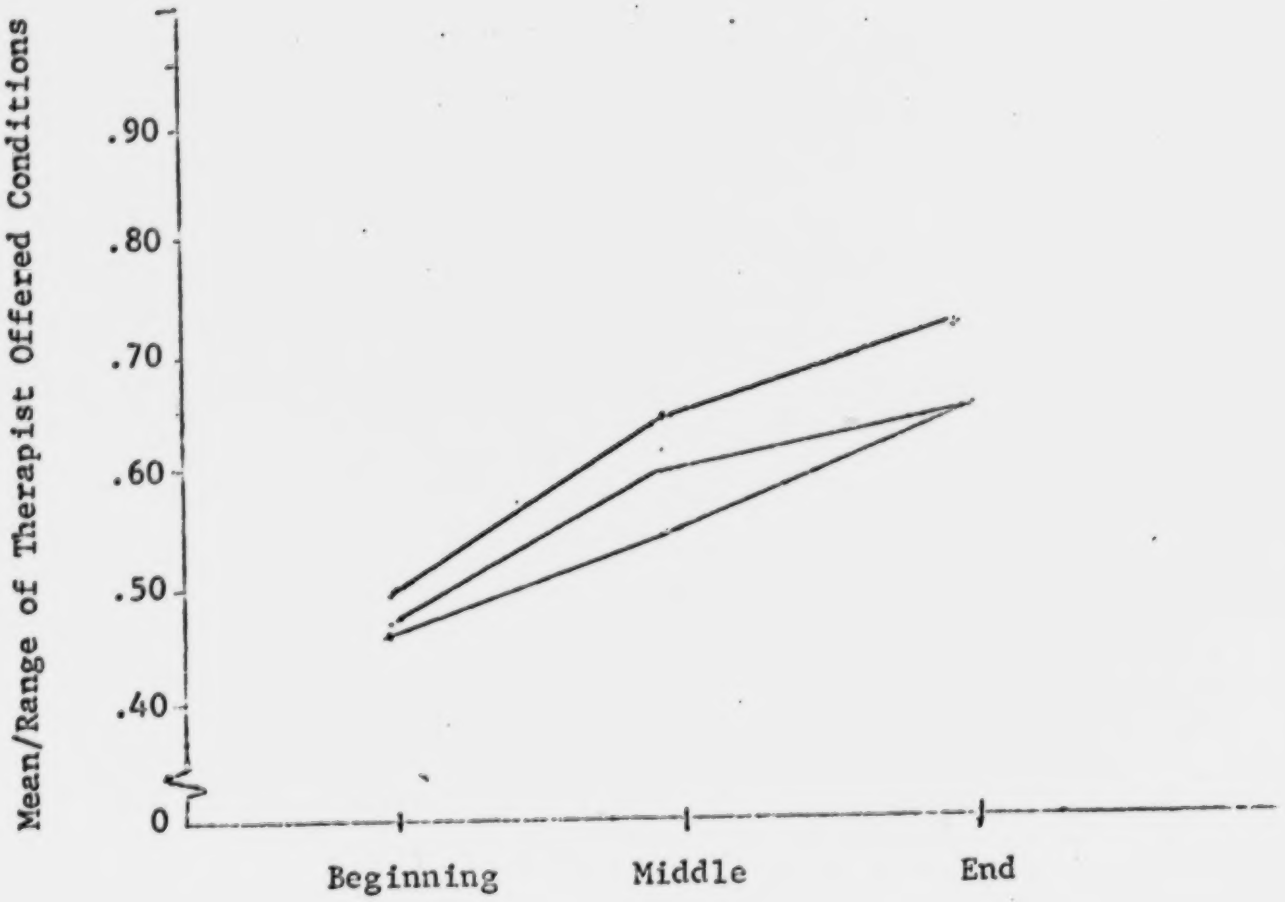

Table 1.--The Values of the Factor Loadings of the Scale (from Jenkins, 1958)

Factor	Loadings	N2 (Communality)
A. Evaluative Factor		
Good-bad	1.00	1.00
Wise-foolish	.57	.40
Kind-cruel	.52	.41
B. Poetency Factor		
Hard-soft	.97	1.00
Masculine-feminine	.47	.27
Strong-weak	.40	.28
C. Activity Factor		
Active-passive	.98	1.00
Fast-slow	.35	.24
Excitable-calm	.26	.13

Table 2.--Mean Scores of Therapist Offered Conditions (N = 9)

	1st week		8th week		15th week	
	Mean	mean/range	Mean	mean/range	Mean	mean/range
Empathy	4.444	.492	5.815	.646	6.519	.724
Warmth	2.370	.474	2.963	.593	3.296	.659
Genuineness	2.333	.466	2.741	.548	3.296	.659

Table 3.--Significant Tests for the Differences between Three Stages of Training (N = 9)

Therapist-offered conditions	t	p[1/]	Percent of variance accounted for[2/]
Empathy			
Beginning-middle	3.928	.01	44.50
Middle-end	2.224	.05	17.50
Beginning-end	5.919	.01	65.40
Warmth			
Beginning-middle	1.892	.05	12.40
Middle-end	1.279	n.s.	3.62
Beginning-end	3.004	.01	30.77
Genuineness			
Beginning-middle	1.367	n.s.	4.60
Middle-end	2.774	.05	26.70
Beginning-end	3.743	.01	41.90

1/ One-tailed t-test for correlated means.
2/ Estimate of the amount of variance based on Hays (1966, p. 327).

Table 4.--Correlations between Empathy, Warmth, and Genuineness (N = 9)

	Stage			Mean correlation
	1	2	3	
Empathy-warmth	.802	.854	3	.853
Empathy-genuineness	.739	.238	.903	.595
Warmth-genuineness	.840	.564	.885	.763

r.05 = .666
r.01 = .798

Table 5.--Counselor Rating Changes
(Means, Paired Standard Error and t Values for Variables Beginning to Middle)

Variable	Mean 1	Mean 2	Paired standard error	t
Sensitive				
Evaluative	3.47	3.20	.221	-1.21
Potency	3.60	4.07	.303	1.53*
Sincere				
Activity	3.70	4.03	.199	1.67*
Professional				
Potency	3.97	4.43	.166	2.81**
Activity	4.13	3.73	.351	-1.14
Permissive				
Evaluative	4.00	3.77	.141	-1.66*
Activity	4.47	3.90	.025	-2.23**
Affectionate				
Activity	2.50	3.37	.074	1.18
Different				
Activity	3.57	3.30	.147	-1.81*
Warm				
Evaluative	3.57	3.00	.222	-2.55**
Understanding				
Potency	4.33	4.17	.090	-1.86**

* $p \leq .10$.
** $p \leq .05$ or greater.

Table 6.--Counselor Rating Changes
(Means, Paired Standard Deviations and t Values for Variables Middle to End)

Variable	Mean 1	Mean 2	Paired standard error	t
Sensitive				
Evaluative	3.20	3.33	.223	n.s.
Potency	4.07	3.87	.151	-1.32
Sincere				
Activity	4.03	3.87	.166	-1.00
Professional				
Potency	4.43	4.27	.151	-1.10
Activity	3.73	3.70	.316	n.s.
Permissive				
Evaluative	3.77	3.83	.130	n.s.
Activity	3.90	4.07	.021	n.s.
Affectionate				
Activity	3.37	3.67	.030	n.s.
Different				
Activity	3.30	3.60	.116	2.59**
Warm				
Evaluative	3.00	3.27	.191	1.39*
Understanding				
Potency	4.17	4.03	.349	n.s.

* $p < .10$.
** $p < .05$ or greater.

Table 7.--Counselor Rating Changes
(Means, Paired Standard Error and t Values for Variables Beginning to End)

Variable	Mean 1	Mean 2	Paired standard error	t
Sincere				
Potency	4.26	4.50	.132	1.76*
Professional				
Evaluative	2.73	3.26	.159	3.36**
Potency	3.97	4.27	.195	1.54*
Activity	4.13	3.70	.286	-1.52*
Permissive				
Activity	4.47	4.07	.020	-2.03**

* $p < .10$.
** $p < .05$ or greater.